

IN THE CLAIMS

Please amend the claims as follows:

Claim 1 (Currently Amended): An apparatus, for heat-processing a mask substrate, comprising:

a heating plate for heating the mask substrate, the mask substrate including having a front surface and a side surface;

heating means for heating the heating plate; and

a frame member, having an inner peripheral surface and a first clearance between the inner peripheral surface and the side surface, being detachably disposed to the heating plate so that the frame member is disposed around the mask substrate.

Claim 2 (Cancelled).

Claim 3 (Currently Amended): The heat processing apparatus as set forth in claim 1, wherein the side inner peripheral surface is curved in a concave shape.

Claim 4 (Currently Amended): The heat processing apparatus as set forth in claim 1, wherein the side inner peripheral surface is curved in a convex shape.

Claim 5 (Currently Amended): The heat processing apparatus as set forth in claim 3, wherein the side inner peripheral surface is a mirror surface.

Claim 6 (Currently Amended): The heat processing apparatus as set forth in claim 3, wherein the side inner peripheral surface is a rough surface.

Claim 7 (Original): The heat processing apparatus as set forth in claim 3, further comprising:

a driving mechanism for moving the frame member so that a distance between the frame member and the side surface of the mask substrate placed on the heating plate varies.

Claim 8 (Original): The heat processing apparatus as set forth in claim 7, further comprising:

means for detecting a temperature of the mask substrate; and

a controlling portion for controlling the driving mechanism in accordance with the detected temperature.

Claim 9 (Currently Amended): The heat processing apparatus as set forth in claim 8, wherein the controlling portion determines whether the temperature of the mask substrate is in [[a]] an increasing state or in a constant state in accordance with the detected temperature, controls the driving mechanism so that the distance between the frame member and the side surface of the mask substrate placed on the heating plate becomes a first distance when the temperature of the mask substrate is in the increasing state and a second distance smaller than the first distance when the temperature of the mask substrate is in the constant state.

Claim 10 (Currently Amended): The heat processing apparatus as set forth in claim 1, wherein the frame member is divided along ~~with the side~~ inner peripheral surface in a peripheral direction of the mask substrate placed on the heating plate.

Claim 11 (Cancelled).

Claim 12 (Original): The heat processing apparatus as set forth in claim 1,
wherein the mask substrate is an approximately square glass substrate having a side surface of six inches long, and
wherein the heating plate is a circular plate for heating a semiconductor wafer having a diameter of 10 inches.

Claim 13 (Withdrawn): A heat processing method for heating a mask substrate placed on a heating plate, comprising the steps of:

- (a) detecting a temperature of the mask substrate; and
- (b) moving a frame member disposed facing a side surface of the mask substrate placed on the heating plate, so that a distance between the mask substrate and the frame member varies in accordance with the detected temperature.

Claim 14 (Withdrawn): The heat processing method as set forth in claim 13, wherein the step (b) has the steps of:

determining whether the temperature of the mask substrate is in an increasing state or in a constant state based on the detected temperature;

moving the frame member so that the distance becomes a first distance when the temperature is in the increasing state; and

moving the frame member so that the distance becomes a second distance smaller than the first distance when the temperature is in the constant state.

Claim 15 (Previously Presented): The heat processing apparatus as set forth in claim 1, further comprising a supporting portion for movably supporting the frame member so that a second clearance is formed between the frame member and the heating plate.

Claim 16 (Previously Presented): The heat processing apparatus as set forth in claim 15, wherein the frame member and the supporting portion comprise material having a heat conductivity.